

## **An adaptation of an article about an island in Panay**

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'Guin bacal co it akong cabuhi ro Boracay ngara'

Sofing said: "Guin bacal co it akong cabuhi ro Boracay ngara".

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Boracay island is undeniably one of the best beaches in the world, with its virgin forest and ecosystem truest of all nature.

Yes. As they all call it, it is truly an Island Paradise.

So what's the story behind that white glitters of sand? When you google it, 99% would say it has one shady unsure history and its name only became known around the Seventies - Bell Bottom years.

I came across an article. It is truly enlightening. I felt the need to share. So here goes:

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Boracay was just an unknown and private island decades ago. For the truth be told, it was indeed one private island inhabited by few islanders, mostly fishermen, and one family to whom the island owes its name, flora and fauna - Lamberto Hontiveros Tirol and Sofia Ner Gonzales.

Sofia Ner Gonzales was born on April 1, 1879 in Sta. Cruz Manila. Her parents were Dr. Cipriano Gomez Gonzales and Florentina Quijano Ner of Cavite.

Dr. Cipriano Gomez Gonzales (Don Panoy) was the first surgeon of Panay, and among those who received a degree in Medicine together with our National Hero, Dr. Jose Rizal in the University of Sto. Tomas where he graduated Meritimus. Among his known classmates and contemporaries were Dr. Luis de Castro who became Dean of the College of Medicine in the same University. His close friend, Jose Ner, was responsible for his meeting his one true love, Florentina Quijano Ner. He later became a Professor and one of his students was Emilio Aguinaldo

Lamberto H. Tirol, son of Solomon Diangson Tirol and Vivencia Isturis Hontiveros, was the grandson of Gabriel Ureta. As history has it, Gabriel Ureta escaped from the clutches of the Spaniards together with his brother Vicente Ureta. They took refuge in the mountains of Austria called Tirol Alps where they spent a number of years. There's no place like home, or so they say, so that Gabriel decided to go home. Knowing he will be in trouble if he retains his old name, he decided to change Ureta to Tirol. And so the story goes. Gabriel Ureta/Tirol married Basilisa Diangson and begot six (6): Solomon, Servando, Tiburcio, Cirilo, Teodoro and Felipa. Solomon married Vivencia Isturiz Hontiveros, daughter of Jose Hontiveros and Gertrude "Owa" Isturiz and begot eight (8) children: Policarpo, Carmen, Aquilina, Eriberto, Lamberto, Ignacio, Leona and Gregorio.

Lamberto H. Tirol studied in San Juan de Letran in Manila and later married the very young chinese meztisa Spanish-speaking lady Sofia. He was once a Political Figure in Aklan and became Mayor for several terms. He later on was appointed as Municipal Judge or "Juez de Paz" of Buruanga, Capiz.

It was considerably an early marriage for both Lamberto and Sofia. Their wedding was celebrated at the Tirol Building formerly called the Gonzales Building which later on changed its name when the Gonzales family sold the same to Ciriaco Tirol.

It is worthy to note that the marriage of Lamberto H. Tirol and Sofia Ner Gonzales was one of an "arranged marriage" set up by Sofia's father. Shortly after their marriage they settled in an island now called Boracay.

They were considered as among the original settlers of Boracay Island, who peacefully and simply lived among the natives and islanders. Fishing was the main livelihood of Boracay. The couple however created one paradise island out of it. While it was Lamberto who invested on seedlings, it was Sofia who had the "green thumb". They introduced farming in the island. Cultivation and Agriculture became the second livelihood of the islanders.

The humble abode of the couple and their family. They had nine (9) but two girls died during infancy (Elsie Edna, Rizalina, Racel, Sol, Josel, Demosthenes, Haide, Belen+ and Florentina+) in Buruanga was just a piece of lot in the island, until some islanders sold their lots to the family. The rest of the islanders followed suit. The family soon realized that they owned a relatively large portion of the island, and provided more than enough not only for the family but also for the few settlers of the island - because of their generosity and kind hearts they were fondly called "Don Lamberto and Dona Sofing". Upon the counsel of Lamberto's nephew, Josefino Santa Maria Tirol (son of Gregorio Tirol and Maria Santa Maria, brother of Lamberto), the portion of the island was owned by the family brought under the Torrens System through the Ordinary Land Registration Proceedings. It was told that, to finance the titling process, Sofia had to sell the engagement ring Lamberto gave her, a large diamond ring. The couple also had mining and fishery in Makato and a portion in Boracay. Buruanga as records of government offices in Aklan would reveal.

As young as a wife she became, so too, did she become a young widow when Lamberto met his Maker in 1924. She was left to tend to their seven (7) Children. It was told that she wept for her beloved half's untimely demise until her death. Despite the sadness and sorrow, she spent all her days in Boracay, nurturing the island as it is one of Lamberto's remembrance - a labor of love.

The young widow continued working and manning the island, with the help of few islanders worthy of her trust. She was said to be stern, strict and brave but with a kind and generous heart. Sometimes one of her daughters would accompany her to sleep in a bodega where they have their bodega plantation. It was quite remarkable for a young widow to do all what Sofia had done during her lifetime that she was seen by many people in Boracay as a woman of courage and perseverance.

Her son, Josel G. Tirol, Sr. also met his Maker at an early age, leaving Lolita Amoroso Denosta a young widow with five (5) Children to tend to. Lolita was pregnant at that time with their youngest son, Roberto. Being a widow herself, Sofia felt for Lolita, so she stayed with Lolita in Tangalan for a number of years after Josel's death. Tangalan then became Sofia's second home. Every time she goes home to Boracay she was always accompanied by her granddaughter Jessica. Jessica was still an infant when her father Josel G. Tirol, Sr. died. When Sofia lived with the family Jessica became a Lola's Girl. She practically grew up with Sofia on her side. It was only when she reached her collegiate years that she had to part with her Lola to pursue her studies in the suburbs.

Life was simple and abundant for Sofia and the children. At times, it became difficult most especially so when it falls on the times to pay realty taxes over Boracay and other properties she owned. But she was able to survive it all. She earned through Copra and Tobacco sales, goods which she herself produced in the island with the help of her workers and tenants. Hiking was nothing for the Dona. She would walk to and from the island in order to earn her keep. She spend most of her days in the island, and when the time came for her to rest and retire, she had to stay in Kalibo with Araceli. She died at the age of 110. She finally closed her weary but happy and contented eyes when her favorite apo, Jessica and her daughter came home to visit Sofia.

Boracay's fame came belatedly, when Sofia was too old to realize and appreciate the fruits of her labor. One time, a group of foreigners came to the island with the intention to shoot a film. It was only then that Boracay became open to the world. It was also that time that the commercialization of the island began.

But the island is still as it is - an Island Paradise. It was through the very hands of Lamberto and Sofia that Boracay flourished into one of nature's magnificent creations.

Boracay received numerous acclamations and recognitions worldwide. It is very well worth our while to get to know the island's caretaker, Dona Sofia, who was known as the Greener of Boracay. As world progress, let us pause and take a breather by looking

back to the days when the island was young in order to appreciate the very hands that tended it, whose life was spent tending the island and her children, all in dedication to her beloved Don Lamberto, and to understand altogether when she said, "guin bacal co it akong cabuhi ro Boracay ngara" - "I bought with my life, this piece of land in Boracay."

*Credits:*

Documents and Court Records of Boracay Ownership and History can be found in the following:

1. Bureau of Lands/Land Management Bureau Records GLRO Record No. 31156, Expediente No. 118, Sofia Ner Gonzales,
2. Court of First Instance/Regional Trial Court of Capiz, Records GLRO Record No. 31156, Expediente No. 118, Sofia Ner Gonzales Solicitante,
3. UP Library Publication,
4. Land Registration Authority Records of the Land Registration Case in favor of Solicitante on 1928 by Judge Leonardo Garduno, Court of First Instance Capiz, with Judicial Decree issued on 1931 by Chief Commissioner Altavaz of the General Land Registration Office
5. Registry of Deeds and Property Kalibo
6. Registry of Deeds and Property Capiz
7. Department of Environment and Natural Resources
8. The Boracay Journals: Herederos de Lamberto Hontiveros Tirol y Sofia Ner Gonzales Grand Reunion, Renaissance 1996-2000
9. Online Bibliography, <http://easybib.com/public/list/key/4d63f6>
10. Heirs of the Tenants/Caretakers of Sofia Ner Gonzales vda. De Tirol
  - Aguirre
  - Sapacano
  - Supretan
  - Vargas
  - Ambay
  - Peroginog
11. Heirs of the Neighbors of Lamberto Hontiveros Tirol and Sofia Ner Gonzales
  - Casidsid
  - Aguirre
  - Manalo
  - Sualog
  - Vargas
  - Anibay
12. Records kept by the Heirs of Lamberto Hontiveros Tirol y Sofia Ner Gonzales (Owners of a portion of Boracay Island along with Ciriaco Tirol and some natives in the island)
  - Elsie Edna Tirol (m. Kimpo)
  - Araceli Tirol (m. Marte)
  - Sol Tirol (m. Carpio)
  - Rizalina Tirol (m. Rojo)
  - Haide Tirol (m. Solidum)
  - Josel Gonzales Tirol (m. Denosta, Lolita)
  - Demosthenes Gonzales Tirol (m. Gonzales, Sylvia)

13. Lamberto Hontiveros Tirol links:

<http://www.britannica.com/bps/media-view/225bb535-dbb1-4684-b55d-1c8e8aadb37/0/0/1>

<http://ia600704.us.archive.org/30/items/LambertoH.TirolAManOfForesight/DonLambertoTirol.jpg>

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One of the original settlers in Boracay Island, Image, from Encyclopædia Britannica Online, accessed November 23, 2011, <http://www.britannica.com/bps/community/media/519c6b77-4b51-4f77-af63-2d3c6673594f>

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15. Sofia Ner Gonzales Links:

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<http://www.britannica.com/bps/media-view/7eceed38-e0d5-4c02-8b45-a1b9d0ae4cdc/1/0/1>

<http://www.archive.org/details/SofiaNerGonzalesTheWomanBehindTheGreeningOfBoracayIsland>

<http://www.archive.org/details/TheLamberto-sofiaConnectionBoracayIslandAklanPhilippines>

<http://ia600803.us.archive.org/12/items/HistoricalNewspaperTheSundayTimesMagazineNovember81987/DonLambertoYDonaSofia1922BoracayIslandPhils.jpg>

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[The Sunday Times, November 1987](#)

<http://euroheritage.net/spanishphilippines.shtml>

<http://euroheritage.net/spanishphilippines2.shtml>

[http://malay.gov.ph/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=18&Itemid=36](http://malay.gov.ph/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=18&Itemid=36)

<http://sc.judiciary.gov.ph/publications/benchmark/2008/10/100804.php>

<http://cambridge-centralasia.academia.edu/boracayisland>

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## Environmental

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hotel, trip, virtual, trip, pod, island, sole, lonely, dimacali, aster, solidum, tolentino, ignacio, blue, bluewaters, waters, prestine, mountain, top, escape, fee, free, land, google, bing, yahoo, aol, ask, answer, cite, site, encyclopedia, rss, view, pre, bureau, land, lands, report, inspect, inspector, too, late, the, hero, movie, german, foreigners, pre, war, heart, boracaynon, islander, purpose, end, people, history, old, past, courts, capiz, nabaz, nabas, altavas, washington, aclan, buruanga, ro, isla, lapus, candington, candingun, heir, herederos, lamber, lamberto, lambert, sofin, soping, sofia, lolit, mamang, kuya, people, note, notable, ruins, paul, landmark, seal, crest, family, coat, arms, food, there, guide, how, sail, to, it, okay, is, of, fish, sea, ocean, cell, intact, billion, hears, new, evidence, primary, sources, davila, tycoon, representative, registry, authority, land, implication, phone, echo, i, am, anchor, congress, consider, president, presidential, decree, judicial, bureau, leader, united, states, right